

ON DRUMS

Choosing a Drum Rack

One more way to
clean up your act

BOB SAYDLOWSKI

MY PAST FEW columns have dealt with choosing hardware, as you may have noticed. There is one more option still to be considered in the Metal Jungle: the drum rack.

A drum rack allows you to mount your drums, cymbals, drum pads, and other miscellaneous goodies from suspended piping, clearing your floor space of numerous tripod bases. Drum racks make for a cleaner-looking setup and cut down on the weight of

your filled trap case, since you no longer need to tote around the bases of the stands, for the most part.

Species of Beast

There are two basic styles of drum racks: free-standing and connecting. Pearl, CB-700, Tama, and Collarlock all make free-standing racks, which have their own side struts to hold the horizontal bar used for drum mounting. Some models are expandable via adaptors and additional bars, and can take your setup to the point where you're virtually caged in.

Yamaha and Collarlock make connectable racks, wherein a bar adapts to your existing cymbal stands on both sides of your drumkit, using them as anchors for the mount bar. This type of setup packs away more easily, but isn't as sturdy (I don't feel) as the free-standing models. It too, can be expanded, but the additional tubes or bars must be connected to cymbal floor stands. You don't really do away with too many stand bases this way, but you can cut down on a few.

While most racks have universal-type adaptors to enable mounting of any tom holder, cymbal post, etc., the Pearl rack uses brackets designed to mate with Pearl 7/8-inch tubing only.

Speaking of extra parts, you'll probably want enough holder posts to cover your present cymbal setup, toms, (not floor toms, unfortunately, unless they're suspended on a floor stand), and any percussion and accessories you have in your kit — like an auxiliary hi-hat, cowbell, tambourine, and so on.

One other type of rack which has been marketed just recently is Invisible's drum rack, which relies on taut cable, like their keyboard stands. This makes a great deal of the rack itself almost invisible to the audience, and gives an ultra high-tech look.

The Three -ilities

As well as considering



Rikki Rockett of Poison on a rack by Collarlock

portability, you should see if the rack sets up and tears down easily, and whether or not there are memory fittings, or some type of gauging to make setting up accurate and efficient each time. Some racks fold right up, and some require complete disassembly (and re-assembly), so think of how much time after your gig you want to devote to packing up your kit.

Of major importance, of course, is stability. If a particular rack shakes or buckles when all the drums and cymbals are added, then cross that one off your list. Since everything is attached, if one portion of the rack fails, it all does, and it could tip over or simply collapse and crash to the floor.

Expandability is major consideration if you plan to add to your setup in the future. Is there enough room for another cymbal post, tom tom, or drum pad? Can additional bars be fitted on to accommodate growth of your kit, or a different drumkit altogether?

Hidden Values

A few nice things about drum racks: the clean, no mess look; distances between pieces won't change upon the next setup; and if you can get

into a cage-type Erector set of rack, cymbals can also be suspended from above.

From the roadie's point of view, a drum rack can be moved off the stage in one swipe, if quick stage changes are needed between acts. If you can move it, the entire rack can be bolted to a riser and packed away in a truck (preferably a semi!). Come show time, you take it out and place it right on stage with absolutely no further setup needed. [*Dream on — Ed.*] Gregg Bissonette's kit packed up like this on the David Lee Roth tour.

Drum synth brains and samplers can be mounted on a drum rack, a great boon to the tech-heads among you, and even your snare drum can be tied on via a boom-type attachment.

Racks certainly give a modernistic look to your drum setup, and can assure an identical setup every time. If you don't mind carrying the piping around, racks are a great alternative to a pile of tripod bases in your trap case. On stage, a drum rack can give new meaning to the term "caged animal!"

Bob Saydlowski, Jr. has been playing drums for 20 years, and boy is he tired.